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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9029
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5957
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 3821
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2333
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7027
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0994
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Iraq, EURO-MED, Boycott
of Israel Conference, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories
(5/16)

1. Summary: Syrian papers reported President Asad's meeting with Subhi Abdul Hamid, Secretary General of Iraq's Arab Nationalist Movement, which tackled the situation in Iraq and bilateral relations. President Asad confirmed Syria's support for efforts to restore Iraq's stability and security that reflect positively on the region. Talks also dealt with the role of the Iraqi national parties in boosting national unity, the necessity of enhancing joint action and fulfilling the aspirations of Iraqi people to find an end to the occupation and restoring Iraq's sovereignty and stability.

Papers also reported statements by Lebanese personalities criticizing UN Resolution 1559 including a statement by FM Salloukh criticizing the current deliberations at the Security Council and the UN Secretary General's latest report, about following up on the implementation of UN 1559 resolution, for not mentioning Israel's continuous violations of Lebanon's sovereignty. Minister Salloukh mentioned that Israel violates Lebanon's airspace every day, arrests Lebanese citizens as hostages with no justification, refuses to deliver the mines maps and still occupies Lebanese land, "which is considered an obvious violation of the UN resolutions" he added. "Nothing of this was mentioned in the current deliberations at the Security Council," the Minister emphasized. "The Lebanese agreed to peruse a specific strategy to implement a series of principles and steps regarding the Syrian-Lebanese tie," he said, rejecting any kind of foreign intervention between the two countries. Meanwhile Lebanese ex-Premier Salim al-Hoss criticized UN resolution 1559 again saying "the Lebanese resistance realized a big victory in May 2000 when they forced the Israeli occupation to withdraw from South Lebanon". For his part, Lebanese parliamentarian Mohammed Ra'ad underscored that Lebanon is committed to the UN resolutions 426 and 425 saying "Implementing these two resolutions dictates for Israeli full withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese lands in accordance with international legitimacy".

Papers also reported that Syria has been chosen Representative of the Second Commission for Cooperation among the EURO-MED Local Authorities COPEM, Dr. Tamer al-Hajjeh, Governor of Aleppo announced on Monday. The Governor said that "the election of

Syria to the committee came during the Ninth General Assembly meetings for the Permanent Committee for EURO-MED Partnership of Local Authorities held recently in Palermo of Italy." Syria participated at the EURO-MED meetings with an official delegation headed by Dr. Hajjeh who underscored that "he would exert all efforts to boost and cement ties between the local authorities in the EURO-MED region" noting that "Syria has always been for the international legitimacy and intercultural dialogue."

Papers also reported a statement by Mohammad al-Taieb Bou-Sallaa, Commissioner General of the Boycott of Israel, at the opening session of the 76th Conference of Regional Liaison Officers for the Boycott of Israel in Damascus, confirming that "a just and comprehensive peace in the region will not be achieved without a full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, occupied Golan and South Lebanon as well as the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital," Bou-Sallaa said at the opening session of the 76th Conference of Regional Liaison Officers for the Boycott of Israel.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad discusses with Subhi Abdul Hamid, Secretary General of Iraq's Arab Nationalist Movement, Syrian-Iraqi relations and the role of national parties in consolidating Iraq's national unity. Syria supports efforts exerted to restore Iraq's security and stability" (Government-owned 5/16)

"Syria is elected Deputy to the Second Commission for Cooperation among EURO-MED Local Authorities COPEM" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 5/16)

"The Lebanese National Dialogue resumes today. Berri: The resistance is a national necessity to build a defense strategy" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 5/16)

"A new round of the Lebanese National dialogue will be held today. Aoun attends as an observer. FM Salloukh criticize the UN Security Council's disregard for Israeli violations" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 5/16)

"Wide Lebanese resentment over honoring US Ambassador to UN John Bolton" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/16)

"Two American soldiers killed in helicopter crash" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/16)

"Putin reiterates support of Palestinians. Jenin buries its martyrs. Israel: The right of return is erased" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 5/16)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Compensation for Failure"

Muhammad Khair al-Jamali, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (5/16): "The draft UNSC resolution that calls on Syria to demarcate its border with Lebanon and establish diplomatic relations with it is a serious precedent in the history of the international relations....

"The demarcation of borders and the establishment of diplomatic relations are sovereign issues in which no party has a right to interfere.... Such interference harms the sovereignty of the two countries no matter what excuses are offered to justify it....

"Through such a resolution, the Security Council exceeds its powers under the UN Charter and serves the interests of forces that seek to define international relations in a way that serves their own interests.... Washington, through the draft

resolution, seeks to export its own crises and compensate for the failure of US policy in the Middle East."

"Inside and outside the Lebanese National Dialogue"

Shawkat Abu-Fakhr, a commentator in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (5/16): "Some parties to the Lebanese national dialogue say things at the dialogue table and different things outside the dialogue sessions. These forces level accusations and plant the seeds of division based on rancorous revenge positions that seek to punish the Lebanese resistance...."

"The advocates of sovereignty, independence, and free decision make a mistake when they think that going to foreign capitals and deriving power from them could establish sound and healthy relations with their brothers...."

"Those Lebanese taking procedural and contentious issues to the United Nations in an effort to pressure Syria show a lack of political experience and reveal a tendency for vengeance...."

"The sacrifices of the Lebanese and the support of the brothers have entrenched the resistance as an indisputable fact in Lebanon no matter what the international position...."

"No Time for Yawning"

Abdul-Fattah Awad, Chief Editor of government-owned Al-Thawra, criticized (5/16): "Some Syrians claim to be patriotic, while they meet and shake hands with people who call for harming and occupying Syria and consider it, not Israel, the enemy...."

"Their objectives, ideas, and programs have reached the point of adhesion with the objectives, ideas, and programs of parties that openly declare hostility toward Syria...."

"How can we hear daily threats, bear painful pressure, face economic sanctions and then see someone agreeing with them, using their expressions, speaking their language, raising their demands and yet giving us lectures on patriotism?"

"Can one claim to be patriot while his ideas concur with those who consider Syria an enemy?"

"These people cannot deceive the Syrian people when they talk about reforms.... Reforms must proceed from within the country, not be imposed or dictated by foreigners...."

"Only reforms are the exemplary answer for those.... Achievements on the ground are the real evidence of a genuine intention to proceed with reforms. There is no time for yawning while wolves are surrounding us."

"The New Shape of Apartheid"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (5/16): "The Israeli law that prevents Palestinian family reunions is not the first racist Israeli law against Palestinians. The new law is politically motivated and part of a clear Zionist effort targeting the entire Arab presence in Palestine...."

"This is part of the true face of the racist Israeli entity, which completely disregards human rights and international legitimacy, and which was built on injustice, repression, and aggression. Yet some parties in this 'free world' claim that

Israel is an oasis of democracy! For how long will this twisted logic, which can only be described as a pure colonialist logic, continue...?"

"For Whom the Lebanese Cedar Trophy"

As'ad Abbud, a columnist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (5/16): "The March 14 forces in Lebanon have participated in a ceremony in New York in which John Bolton, US Representative to the United Nations, was awarded the Lebanese Cedar Trophy....

"Bolton is an arrogant Zionist who boasts his absolute loyalty to Israel and who hates every Arab and Muslim....

"Leaders of March 14 forces have now proven that they are really the enemies of Syria.... But the Lebanese people will not give them a chance.... Their American-French-Israeli love will not be enough to dry up the sea of love between Syria and Lebanon."

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